

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: September 24, 2001

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-64)

TO: David Byrnes - KEWL-4  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

**Proposed Action:** Yakima Basin Side Channels Project, Easton Reach Land Acquisition

**Project No:** 1997-051-00

**Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis**  
**(See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS):** 2.15 Acquisition of Sensitive Riparian Resources

**Location:** Yakima River Basin, Kittitas County, Washington

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Yakama Nation

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to purchase approximately 96 acres (2 parcels) of private property in the Yakima River Basin in Kittitas County, Washington as part of the Yakima River Side Channels Project. Title to the land will be transferred to the United States Government, Bonneville Power Administration for fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement. The goal of this project is to contribute toward the rebuilding of Yakima Basin spring chinook salmon and steelhead populations by improving survival during their first year of life. This will be accomplished by protecting and restoring off-channel rearing habitats associated with the mainstem of the Yakima River. Historically, these habitats have been severely degraded through the construction of transportation corridors, irrigation developments, and diking activities.

The Easton Reach area of the Yakima River contains a variety of aquatic and riparian habitats that support native fish, reptiles, and amphibians, as well as waterfowl. Conservation of these parcels will contribute to the rebuilding of steelhead and chinook salmon runs in the Yakima River system. These lands are located in a portion of the watershed where a large percentage of the basin's spring chinook salmon spawn. Upon hatching, young salmon fry move into the shallow areas along the river margins to begin their early growth. These parcels in particular contain numerous shallow backwater channels and wetlands that are protected by a thick over-story of native trees and brush. These features are important for the development of the young fish during their first year of life. This project proposes to preserve these 96 acres in their natural condition, which will ensure that this critical fish rearing habitat is maintained in the future..

**Analysis:** The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Melvin Sampson with The Yakama Nation and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). A management plan will be prepared for the property after it is purchased and will follow the guidelines and mitigation measures detailed in the Watershed Management Program EIS and ROD.

No plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will be affected by the fee-title purchase of the subject property. ESA listed species that may be present in the project vicinity include bald eagle, bull trout, Canada lynx, Northern spotted owl, Ute ladies'-tresses, and steelhead.

Section 7 consultation will be conducted by BPA and The Yakama Nation, as necessary, prior to the implementation of any restoration or enhancement activities on the site.

A cultural resource literature review and field survey of the Easton Reach parcels was conducted by Applied Archaeological Research on July 4, 2001. The background review found that no archaeological resources occur within either of the two parcels and that prior archaeological studies in the general vicinity of the proposed land acquisition have not resulted in the discovery of archaeological materials. The field study also failed to identify any cultural resources on the two subject parcels. Based on these findings, BPA concluded that the acquisition of the Easton Reach parcels would have no effect on prehistoric or historic artifacts. The Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) concurred with this finding on July 26, 2001. In the unlikely event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity of the finds will be discontinued and the area secured until the Washington State OAHP is notified.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the Easton Reach parcels was completed on May 18, 2001 by Frederick Walasavage an Environmental Specialist with BPA. Based on this assessment, it was determined that there are no recognized environmental conditions associated with the subject properties that would impact the acquisition of these lands.

Public involvement associated with this project has included written notification and solicitation of comments to interested parties, adjacent landowners, local tribes, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Project notifications were also published in the local newspaper. Public response from these notifications included numerous questions about the project location and purpose. Once clarification was provided, interested parties expressed general support for the project. Because of initial favorable comments on this project, it was decided that subsequent public meetings and/or workshops were not warranted.

**Findings:** The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6A.2, 7.6B.3, & 7.8E.1, of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This Supplement Analysis finds 1) that the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD, and, 2) that there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart

Shannon C. Stewart  
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney  
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 9-26-2001

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist  
Washington OAHP Concurrence Letter

cc: (w/o attachments)

Scott Nicolai - Yakama Nation, YKFP  
M. Wolcott - TR-3